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# AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY.

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**Proceedings at New Haven, October 23d, 1878.**

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THE autumn meeting was held, as usual, in the Library of the Divinity School, the President in the chair. The Recording Secretary being absent, his duties were performed by the Librarian and Treasurer.

On the recommendation of the Directors, the following persons were elected Corporate Members of the Society :

Mr. Henry Johnson, of Brunswick, Me ;  
Mr. William O. Sproull, of Cincinnati, O.

Communications were presented as follows :

1. On certain Sepulchral Monuments of Southern India, by Prof. John Avery, of Brunswick, Me.

There are found in various parts of Europe, in northern Africa, and in western Asia, certain ancient stone monuments of peculiar construction. They are built of enormous slabs or bowlders of uncut stone, weighing in some instances hundreds of tons, and poised upon one another with incredible labor. There is an almost complete absence of inscriptions or other marks upon them by which their builders might be identified. That they were designed to mark the resting places of the dead, and were not temples of the Druids, as many early observers supposed, is not doubtful. In the silence of history, and of all but the faintest tradition regarding their age and the men who raised them, our best evidence is their contents. These are, besides burnt and unburnt human remains, pottery--mostly of a rude pattern--stone, flint, and iron implements, and in a few cases coins of Roman emperors. The latter, if not secondary deposits, prove the comparatively recent construction of some of the monuments.

As we go eastward from Syria and Circassia these megalithic remains abruptly cease, and are replaced in the broad tract between Arabia and Eastern Iran by microlithic structures. When, however, we reach the valley of the Cabul, the western forms reappear ; and if we cross the Indus, and pass to the south of the Vindhya range, we come upon a region where all the principal varieties of megalithic remains occurring in Europe may be counted by hundreds. The resemblance is not merely general, but embraces small details of form and contents. Besides the question of their age and builders, this unexpected and striking coincidence raises the inquiry whether the men who built the Indian monuments were kindred to those who constructed similar tombs in the West. In reply to the first question it may be said that the Aryan Indians did not build them, for no remains of the sort are found in the region longest occupied by them. We must conclude, then, either that the present natives of southern India are the descendants of the dolmen-builders, or that the credit of their construction belongs to some prior population which has since disappeared. But as there is no evidence from other sources of such an earlier settlement, we regard the first supposition as more probable. In confirmation of this view, it appears that some of the rude tribes among the mountains at the present day, not only connect their funeral rites with the ancient monuments but construct new ones of the patterns which are believed to be the latest-developed of the series, namely, the open dolmen and the stone

circles. In some instances a long stone placed in the dolmen suffices to represent the deceased. In regard to age, if these examples are a genuine survival of a wide-spread custom, we must believe that the monuments represent an unbroken series running back from the present to a past of which we cannot assign a limit. Whether there is any family connection between the builders of these monuments and those of the West cannot be confidently decided, but the indications of it deserve attention. The agreement in peculiar details of construction and mode of burial, which could hardly have been accidental; the probable immigration of the Dravidians from central Asia, and the existence of similar remains in the Cabul valley; the affinity of the south-Indian languages to those of the Turanian family; and the hints that members of this family settled Europe before the arrival of the Aryans, are suggestions of a connection which future researches may develop into certainty.

Dr. Ward added remarks on similar monuments in Palestine.

## 2. On Tentative Linguistic Forms, by Prof. C. R. Lanman, of Baltimore, Md.

Professor Lanman pointed out that a schematic or tabulated statement of the inflective forms of a language generally represents all forms as equally common and definite. In fact, however, some cases are of exceedingly infrequent occurrence. Thus, the dative plural neuter of the Sanskrit *a*-declension occurs but once in the whole Rig-Veda, while the nominative singular masculine occurs over 10,000 times.

A systematic collection of all the forms of noun-inflection in the Riksanhita shows that in the most rarely occurring cases there is often a corresponding uncertainty respecting the form. In some instances, where a very unfamiliar form is required by the circumstances, or by the needs of grammatical concord, the difficulty is evaded outright, by making, for example, a masculine adjective agree with a neuter noun. In other instances, we see attempts to make the form in accordance with one or another analogy of the language; but one poet makes it in one way, and another in another.

These phenomena of uncertain and wavering linguistic usage may be properly termed tentative linguistic forms. Thus, there is occasion for the use of the nominative-accusative singular neuter of stems in *r* about nine times in the Rig-Veda; and, as it would seem, there are three and perhaps four different forms, or attempts to make case-forms, to meet the emergency. Each of these trial-forms was equally well adapted for the expression of the relation intended; each was doubtless equally well understood; and each is the result of an individual act of human attribution. As time went on, one form became generally accepted, to the exclusion of the others. Here then we see an illustration of the fact that language is as it is "by convention" rather than "by nature," as well in the domain of inflection as in that of name-giving.

## 3. On Female Education and the Legal Position of Women in China, with a translation of a Chinese primer for girls, by Prof. S. Wells Williams, of New Haven.

This communication was designed to show that the highest education which could be obtained had always been as open among the Chinese for girls as for boys, and that the laws of the land had distinctly defined the legal rights of women. It gave an extract from Lu-chau, a modern writer on female education, describing the plan adopted in the twelfth century before Christ for teaching the ladies in the palace their lessons; and introduced several references from the Book of Odes, indicating the condition of women in those periods of Chinese history. One of these extracts showed their equality with their husbands; another their privilege in time of harvest to glean in the fields; and a third the refusal of a lady of high rank to fulfill a betrothal, because her fiancé had not sent all the required presents and paid her all the respect that etiquette required.

From these scattered notices it could be seen that the legal standing of women, especially their marital rights as now defined in the *Ta Tsing Liuh-ti* or Statutes of the present Manchu dynasty, was greatly owing to the teachings of those early

times. Stress was laid on the equal position of the wife and mother in the ancestral worship as tending to maintain their rights in society in those relations; and a synopsis of those rights was given, taken from chapters 100 to 117 inclusive. These chapters contain rules to be observed in contracting and completing a marriage, reasons for divorce, list of marriages which are *per se* null, and penalties for false or forced marriages.

The existence of many works specially designed for teaching women was referred to, and an extended notice of one authoress given. This was Pan Hwui-pan, sister of Pan Ku, historian of the Early Han dynasty, whose unfinished annals she completed about A. D. 80, after his death. Her treatise on female education was written for the young empress, whom the emperor Ho espoused and committed to her training. It has been the model and incentive for after writers, both male and female, who have extended the range and number of works specially designed for the benefit of young ladies. One of these writers, named Luhchau, was prefect of Canton, and in his Female Instructor, written in 1712, he pays a high compliment to the Lady Pan's treatise. One mode of honoring the memory of distinguished women common among the Chinese—that of erecting honorary gateways of carved stone and placing them in thoroughfares and cities, with suitable inscriptions—was adverted to as a proof of the regard paid to the sex.

These remarks were preliminary to the main part of the paper, which was a translation of the primer entitled the *Nü-erh Yü*, or Words for Women and Girls. It was printed anonymously in 1838, and without any preface, by a book-store called the Evening Incense Arbor, well-known perhaps to those who are conversant with Chinese publishers; but no town is mentioned. It has 228 lines, mostly in tetrameters, containing 967 characters; and as many of them are repeated, the labor of memorizing the whole primer is not very great, and is much aided by the rhythmical form. Its instruction is chiefly moral, beginning with household duties, and proceeding thence to advice concerning frugality, hospitality, and the respect due to seniors and a husband's relatives. The obedience due to him and his parents is insisted on, and then directions follow as to the proper mode of governing a family, the nurture of children, and conduct towards neighbors and friends. The little book closes with a comparison between the discreet, courteous, and educated mother and wife, and the slatternly gad-about, who is disliked and despised by everybody.

#### 4. On the Dispersion of the Semitic Peoples, by Prof. T. C. Murray, of Baltimore, Md.

The object of the paper was to present the philological evidence as to the home and the dispersion of the Semitic peoples. 1. North Semitic. The dialects of the North Semitic peoples seemed to point to a common place of departure—the lower Euphrates valley, in whose neighborhood they for a time dwelt together. Their successive emigrations, as reflected in their dialects, were discussed at some length. 2. South Semitic. The philological evidence of the South Semitic, sifted in a similar manner, was found to indicate that northern Arabia was their common centre. 3. The comparison of the two branches of the language was minutely traced up, and it was concluded that the linguistic evidence gives us ground to believe that Arabia was the immediate home of this family of languages, and that in the classical Arabic we have, on the whole, the fairest representative of the original Semitic speech.

#### 5. On the Relation in the Rig-Veda between the Palatal and Labial Vowels (*i*, *î*, *u*, *ü*) and their corresponding Semivowels (*y*, *v*), by Mr. A. H. Edgren, of New Haven.

Dr. Edgren began with pointing out the difference between the Vedic dialect and the classical Sanskrit in regard to the treatment and occurrence before dissimilar vowels of *i*, *u* or *y*, *v*: the semivowels being alone found (by conversion or otherwise) in the classical language, but the two vowels being of very frequent occurrence, as proved by metrical evidence, in the Veda. There seems to be, at first glance, a great confusion and lawlessness in the use of either in the Rig-Veda, but a careful examination of the whole field shows beyond doubt that,

whatever share arbitrary usage and corruption of the texts may have in the varied occurrence of vowel or semivowel, it is in the main of organic nature, and gives additional support to the theory that the semivowels in question are only later developments of the more primitive vowels *i* and *u*, and that we meet in the Rig-Veda with a transitional state. Dr. Edgren then tried to demonstrate by an exhaustive statistical account of all cases in the Rig-Veda in which *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū* or *y*, *v* occur before vowels, that the more primitive sounds had been retained as a rule, or prevaillingly, wherever they occurred at the end of a word or stem, and thus helped to preserve the individuality of the word; and, on the other hand, that the semivowels are found to prevail in all combinations the original independence and significance of which were dimmed and forgotten (as in derivative and especially inflectional suffixes, and in radical elements). The whole subject was considered under three different heads: 1. The treatment of final *i* *ī* *u* *ū* of words or themes before dissimilar vowels; 2. the occurrence of *i* or *y*, *u* or *v* in formative elements; and 3. their occurrence in the radical part of the word.

1. In the collocation of words in sentences, *i* and *u* are retained almost without exception. In 1294 verses chosen from all the Mandalas, *i* and *u* occur together 391 times, *y* and *v* only 6 times (in *prāty*, *ānv*, *sādhv*). An examination of a number of other passages confirmed the fact that only a few such less independent words as prepositions have begun to show a tendency to convert into a semivowel the final *i* or *u* before a dissimilar vowel. In compounds the case is nearly the same. Final *i* and *u* occur altogether in 553 instances, but their corresponding semivowels only 52 times; and it is especially the prepositions *ati*, *abhi* which convert their vowels. Two words (*gāvryūti*, *rtvīy*) occur not less than 39 times of the 52, but at least the former of them (*gāvryūti*) is of doubtful formation. In noun-stems ending in *i*, *ī*, *u* or *ū*, the *i* (*ī*) is retained in 392 instances, but consonantized in 240 instances; and the *u* (*ū*) is retained 285 times, but consonantized 241 times (chiefly, or 110 times, in the two forms *mādhvas*, *vāsvas*). If each stem alone be considered, the difference in the occurrence of vowel or semivowel is much more marked, the vowel (*i* or *u*) being found then about twice as often as the semivowel. In both cases, the final long vowel is preserved more tenaciously than the short: the *ū*-stems, indeed, never consonantizing *ū* before a vowel-ending; and further, thematic *i* (*ī*) is found to occur mostly after a long, and *y* after a short syllable. In verb-roots the final *i*- and *u*-vowels are generally combined with the following vowel through the medium of *guna*-strengthening or the insertion of a semivowel, less frequently by conversion of the final. The vowel *i* is retained in 51 instances, the vowel *u* never.

2. Of the formative elements, the derivative suffixes were taken up first; and of them the suffix *-ia* (*-ya*) is by far the most frequent. The form *-ia* occurs 2033 times, and *-ya* 1628 times. There are 47 words which are found in different passages with both forms, *-ia* and *-ya*, but as a rule even these show very prevaillingly one of the forms (in two thirds of the cases it is *-ia*), and the exceptionally used termination is in one half of the instances a *ᾗπαξ λεγόμενον*. In connection with these statistics were considered certain attendant phenomena helping to prove that the occurrence of *-ia* or *-ya* is not arbitrary, but depends on the organism of the word. Thus *-ia* is found with very few exceptions wherever the suffix has the circumflex. Further, a long syllable is followed in 189 simple words (in 41 of which the suffix has the circumflex) by *-ia*, and in only 37 simple words (all without the circumflex) by *-ya*. A short syllable is followed in 85 simple words (in 45 of which the suffix has the circumflex) by *-ia*, and in 98 simple words (in 12 of which the suffix has the circumflex) by *-ya*. Finally, in regard to their derivation, words clearly derived from a theme in *-a* (as *ganā* from *gana*) take almost invariably the suffix-form *-ia*. Of 110 such derivatives, there are only 8 absolute exceptions to the rule. Next in order, all the other formative suffixes containing an *i* or *y* or *u* or *v* were considered, and it was shown that the concurrent phenomena of a preceding long or short syllable and a subsequent vowel or semivowel respectively is clearly traceable everywhere, more absolutely so in regard to *u*, *v* than in regard to *i*, *y*. In declensional endings the vowel *i* is found altogether 128 times, and the semivowel *y* nearly 4800 times. Even here the preservative influence of a preceding long syllable seems traceable, the vowel occurring in 123 instances (out of 128) after a long

syllable. In verb-inflection, the semivowels are found almost exclusively, the exceptions being: *ia* as a class-sign 5 times, as a tense-sign once, in optatives 95 times; *ua* in a class-sign 6 times, in a personal ending 12 times, and in various forms of the root *dhanv* (perhaps as a class-sign) 14 times.

Finally, the occurrence of the vowels or semivowels in question in roots or in the radical part of words was considered; and it was shown that the semivowels are found with comparatively few exceptions (chiefly *tua-* and *súar*) in the great mass of such words. The exceptions are: *i* in verb-roots 27 times, in pronominal roots 29 times, in more uncertain combinations 71 times; *v* once doubtfully in the verb-root *suad*, in pronominals several hundred times, owing to the frequency of the form *tua-*, in more uncertain combinations 244 times, mainly in the word *súar* (233 times) and its compounds.

6. On the Vedic Compounds having an apparent Genitive as prior member; by Mr. Maurice Bloomfield, of Baltimore, Md.; presented by Prof. Lanman.

There are in the Rig-Veda seven compound nouns, the second part of which is the noun *páti*: namely, *gná's-páti* with its feminine *gná's-pátnī*, *já's-páti* with the abstract *jáspatyá*, *br'has-páti*, *ráthas-páti*. *vánas-páti*. *ṣubhás-páti*, *sádas-páti*. It is seen that in every case the first part of the compound ends in *s*, and that they have double accent. By looking at the connections and surroundings of these compounds, it will likewise appear that they are old formations. For instance, *ṣubhás-páti* occurs 17 times in five books, always as epithet of the Aṣvins; *vánas-páti* is not only used to designate 'tree,' but also has the meaning of 'sacrificial post,' 'pole of a wagon,' in dual 'mortar and pestle,' etc., which can only be explained by assuming that the meanings of the component parts had quite faded out when the words were thus used. *Gná's-páti* and *gná's-pátnī* are evidently old; they occur only in connection with *Tvashtar*, and such a feminine as *gná's-pátnī* would be impossible from a newly-coined word. These compounds have been most commonly explained by regarding some of them as genitive compounds and the rest as formed with *s* by false analogy. This is not satisfactory; for there are no genitive compounds in the Veda, and it would be hard to assume such with *páti* alone. Besides, that would not account for the double accent. Other explanations are still less to be approved. I suggest hesitatingly: 1. that the *s* before *páti* as well as the difficult  $\sigma$  of  $\delta\epsilon\sigma\pi\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$  and  $\delta\epsilon\sigma\pi\acute{o}\iota\nu\alpha$ , which I would connect with *gná's-páti* and *gná's-pátnī*, be explained as a trace of *spa*, a more ancient form of the root *pá*; 2. that the double accent be regarded as an attempt on the part of the compilers of the Veda to account for the *s*. In connection with this it will be well to remember that the compilers have constantly mistaken *uloká* for *u* and *loká*, even where this division would place the enclitic at the beginning of a *páda*; also the very faint traces which are found of the fuller form of the root *kar*, namely, *skar*. Besides this, the assumption of the root *spa* as an older form of *pá* would furnish us with the simple root from which *spak* is formed by the root-determinative *k*, like *dark* (*dr̥c*) from *dar*. To this the meaning of *pá* is also favorable, if we simplify the common signification of 'protect' into 'overlook,' 'oversee.' It would also account for the fact that two roots *pá*, often coinciding in form, have meanings so hard to bring together as 'drink' and 'protect.'

After the reading of these communications, the Society adjourned.